



UTAH STATE DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

A large, stylized outline of the state of Utah, tilted slightly to the right. The interior of the outline is filled with a fine, dotted pattern.

ORIGINS OF **UTAH PLACE NAMES**

O R I G I N S O F U T A H P L A C E N A M E S

(Fourth Edition)

Compiled and Written by
UTAH WRITERS' PROJECT
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

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INTRODUCTION TO THE FOURTH EDITION

ORIGINS OF UTAH PLACE NAMES was compiled and written by the Utah Writers' Project and by its predecessor, the Federal Writers' Project. While many organizations and individuals assisted with the project, special recognition was given to the following:

Mr. Alvin Smith, Librarian, and Mr. Andrew Jenson, Assistant Historian, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Mr. Dee R. Bramwell, State Director, and Mr. Dale L. Morgan, Historical Editor, WPA Historical Records Survey; and Mr. Richard A. Hart, Assistant Director of Public Relations, Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company.

The Secondary Division of the State Department of Public Instruction, in recognition of the constant need for supplementary material related to Utah, is issuing this fourth edition with the hope that seventh grade students and teachers will find ORIGINS OF UTAH PLACE NAMES both interesting and challenging.

The name origins of a number of places are still unknown or uncertain. Readers are invited to accept the challenge of making this compilation complete by submitting any information they may have regarding these places.

It should be noted that population figures are based on the 1950 census inasmuch as 1960 census figures were not yet available at the time the material was edited.

U T A H

" THE BEEHIVE STATE "

THE STATE OF UTAH lies west of the Rocky Mountains, midway between Canada and Mexico. It has no natural boundaries, but is bordered on the north by Idaho and Wyoming, on the east by Wyoming and Colorado, on the south by Arizona, and on the west by Nevada. It is the eleventh largest State in the Union.

ORIGIN OF STATE NAME: The Mormon settlers first called their new home "Deseret," a Book of Mormon word meaning "honey-bee." When the region became a Territory, in 1850, the Mormons were unsuccessful in their attempt to have this name retained. Instead, Congress called the new Territory, "Utah," a name coined from the nickname of a tribe of Shoshone Indians who inhabited much of this region. The Navajo and Apache Indians called these Indians "Utes," a term meaning "the upper people" or "the hill-dwellers." This nickname was used in much the same manner as the English term "highlanders" is used to designate the people in the Scotch Mountains. Early journals spelled the name a number of different ways, including Yuta, Eutaw, Uta, etc. When the Territory became a State, in 1896, the name "Utah" was retained.

ALTITUDE: Average elevation of cities and towns, 4,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level. Lowest elevation, 2,250 feet, where the Virgin River flows into Arizona. Highest elevation, 13,449 feet, on the summit of Kings Peak in the Uinta Mountains.

POPULATION: 1950 United States Census, 688,862; 1960 estimate, 890,627.

AREA: 84,990 square miles.

FIRST PERMANENT SETTLEMENT: Salt Lake City, July 1847.

ESTABLISHED AS A TERRITORY: September 9, 1850.

ACHIEVED STATEHOOD: January 6, 1896.

STATE CAPITAL: Salt Lake City

STATE SEAL: Adopted April 3, 1896. The design of the Seal centers around a shield upon which appear the State emblem (a beehive), the State flower (the sego lily), the State motto ("Industry"), and the date of settlement (1847). Above the shield is an American eagle with outspread wings; and on either side is draped an American Flag. Below the shield is the date Utah achieved Statehood (1896); and encircling the entire design are the words: "The Great Seal of the State of Utah."

STATE FLAG: Adopted March 11, 1913. The design of the Flag consists of the State insignia, in natural colors, in the center of a field of blue, fringed with gold.

STATE EMBLEM: The Beehive, symbol of industry.

STATE FLOWER: The Sego Lily (Spanish mariposa), adopted March 18, 1911.

STATE TREE: The Blue Spruce, adopted February 5, 1933.

STATE BIRD: The Sea Gull, adopted March 3, 1955.

STATE SONG: "Utah, We Love Thee," composed by Evan Stephens. First sung January 6, 1896, during celebration of Utah's admission to the Union. Officially adopted February 21, 1917; accidentally omitted from Revised Statutes of 1933; readopted February 24, 1937.

NAME ORIGINS OF UTAH COUNTIES

- BEAVER COUNTY: (Created 1856. Area: 2,660 Sq. M. County seat: Beaver.)
So named because of the large colonies of beaver that formerly inhabited the streams of this vicinity.
- BOX ELDER COUNTY: (Created 1856. Area: 5,444 Sq. M. County seat: Brigham City.) So named because of the profuse growth of box elder trees near Brigham City.
- CACHE (CASH) COUNTY: (Created 1856. Area: 1,164 Sq. M. County seat: Logan.) Derived its name from a French word meaning "to hide," and was so named because early trappers cached their furs, traps, ammunition and supplies in this region.
- CARBON COUNTY: (Created 1894. Area: 1,487 Sq. M. County seat: Price.)
So named because of the immense deposits of coal and hydrocarbon shale in this area.
- DAGGETT COUNTY: (Created 1916. Area: 850 Sq. M. County seat: Manila.)
Named for Ellsworth Daggett, surveyor of the canal system for this section of the State.
- DAVIS COUNTY: (Created 1850. Area: 275 Sq. M. County seat: Farmington.)
Named for Captain Daniel C. Davis of the Mormon Battalion.)
- DUCHESNE (doo-SHAYN) COUNTY: (Created 1914. Area: 3,266 Sq. M. County seat: Duchesne.) Origin of name uncertain. Some believe the county was named for a French-Canadian trapper of the 1830's and 1840's. Others maintain that it derived its name from Fort Duquesne, built by the French in 1754 on the present site of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- EMERY COUNTY: (Created 1880. Area: 5,453 Sq. M. County seat: Castle Dale.) Named in honor of George W. Emery, Territorial Governor of Utah, 1875-1880. The name originally proposed was Castle County.
- GARFIELD COUNTY: (Created 1882. Area: 5,234 Sq. M. County seat: Panguitch.) Named in honor of James A. Garfield, twentieth President of the United States.
- GRAND COUNTY: (Created 1890. Area: 3,692 Sq. M. County seat: Moab.)
Derived its name from Grand River (since renamed Colorado River), which flows through the county. The river was first named Grand because of its great size, and later renamed Colorado because of the remarkable colorings throughout its channel.
- GREAT SALT LAKE COUNTY: Renamed (see Salt Lake County).
- IRON COUNTY: (Created 1850. Area: 3,256 Sq. M. County seat: Parowan.)
So named because of the early discovery of iron ore in this region. Prior to actual settlement it was called Little Salt Lake County.

JUAB (joo-AB) COUNTY: (Created 1852. Area: 3,401 Sq. M. County seat: Nephi.) Origin of name is uncertain. The county is believed to have derived its name from an Indian word "yoab" meaning "thirsty plain," because much of this area is flat arid land.

KANE COUNTY: (Created 1864. Area: 4,215 Sq. M. County seat: Kanab.) Named in honor of Col. Thomas L. Kane, of Philadelphia, who was very friendly with the Mormons and interceded for them in their early difficulties with the Federal Government.

LITTLE SALT LAKE COUNTY: Renamed (see Iron County).

MILLARD COUNTY: (Created 1852. Area: 6,561 Sq. M. County seat: Fillmore.) Named in honor of Millard Fillmore, thirteenth President of the United States.

MORGAN COUNTY: (Created 1862. Area: 626 Sq. M. County seat: Morgan.) Named for Jedediah Morgan Grant, Mormon pioneer, counselor to Brigham Young, and father of Heber J. Grant, president of the Latter-day Saints Church (1940).

PIUTE (pie-YUTE) COUNTY: (Created 1865. Area: 763 Sq. M. County seat: Junction.) Derived its name from the Paiute Indians. "Pai" means "water," and "Ute" is the name of an Indian tribe. The Paiutes were groups of the Utes who lived near streams and lakes.

RICH COUNTY: (Created 1864. Area: 1,631 Sq. M. County seat: Randolph.) Named for Charles Coulson Rich, early Mormon apostle, who was a prominent leader in the settlement of the Bear Lake region. First called Richland County.

RICHLAND COUNTY: Renamed (See Rich County).

SALT LAKE COUNTY: (Created 1850. Area: 756 Sq. M. County seat: Salt Lake City.) Derived its name from Great Salt Lake, the water of which is exceed in salinity by only the Dead Sea. Until 1868 it was called Great Salt Lake County.

SAN JUAN (san-WAHN) COUNTY: (Created 1880. Area: 1,616 Sq. M. County seat: Monticello.) Derived its name from San Juan River, named by the Spanish priests who discovered it late in the eighteenth century. "San Juan" is the Spanish rendering of the English "Saint John." Three counties in the San Juan River basin carry the same name, one in Utah, one in Colorado, and one in New Mexico.

SANPETE COUNTY: (Created 1850. Area: 7,761 Sq. M. County seat: Manti.) Its name is a corruption of San Pitch, which was the name of a Ute Indian chief who lived in this region during its early settlement.

SEVIER (se-VERE) COUNTY: (Created 1865. Area: 1,978 Sq. M. County seat: Richfield.) Origin of name is uncertain. The county derived its name from Sevier River, along the banks of which are almost all the settlements. Historians disagree concerning the naming of the stream. Some maintain that it was named for Brig. Gen. John Sevier, first Governor of the State of Tennessee, although Sevier apparently never saw the river. Others believe its name is a corruption of an earlier appellation, "Rio Sebrero," applied by early Spanish explorers.

SUMMIT COUNTY: (Created 1854. Area: 1,870 Sq. M. County seat: Coalville.) So named because the county occupies the summit of the watershed between Green River Valley (Colorado River drainage) and Salt Lake Valley (Great Basin drainage).

TOOELE (too-ELL-uh) COUNTY: (Created 1850. Area: 6,849 Sq. M. County seat: Tooele.) Origin of name is uncertain. The following theories have been advanced: 1. That it derived its name from a Gosiute Indian word "tuilla" used to designate a species of flag that grew near the springs in this region. 2. That the name is a corruption of the Spanish word "tule" for rushes, said to have grown here in abundance. 3. That it was named for an Indian chief, Tuilla, who is said to have lived here many years before the white man came. 4. That it was named for the Mattuglie Valley in Southern Europe because of its topographical similarity.

UINTAH (you-IN-tah) COUNTY: (Created 1850. Area: 4,294 Sq. M. County seat: Vernal.) Derived its name from a Ute Indian tribe that rounded the basin when white men arrived in the region. The Indians called themselves "Yugwintats." The first portion of this word (Yugwi) means to sit, but the remainder of the name is of indeterminate meaning.

UTAH COUNTY: (Created 1850. Area: 2,034 Sq. M. County seat: Provo.) It is an interesting fact that this name was given to the county before it was given to the Territory or to the State. (See Origin of State Name.)

WASATCH (WAH-satch) COUNTY: (Created 1862. Area: 1,167 Sq. M. County seat: Heber.) Derived its name from the Wasatch Mountains. Wasatch is a Ute Indian word meaning a mountain pass, or a low pass over a high range.

WASHINGTON COUNTY: (Created 1852. Area: 2,465 Sq. M. County seat: St. George.) Named in honor of George Washington, first President of the United States. This name was probably selected because of the fact that at the time the State legislature created this county, it was also considering a bill to provide a block of Utah marble to be placed in the Washington Monument in Washington, D. C.

WAYNE COUNTY: (Created 1892. Area: 2,475 Sq. M. County seat: Loa.) Said to have been so named by Willis E. Robinson, member of the State legislature, in honor of his son, Wayne.

WEBER (WEE-ber) COUNTY: (Created 1850. Area: 541 Sq. M. County seat: Ogden.) Origin of name is uncertain. The county derived its name from Weber River, but historians disagree concerning the name of the stream. One version is that it was named for John Weber, one of the early fur trappers with William Sublette. It is believed that Weber was killed by Indians near this river in the winter of 1828-29. Another version is that the stream was named for Pauline Weaver, another early trapper who was a frontiersman in Arizona. Some early writers mention the stream as Weaver's Fork.